

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2041

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SP, US

SUBJ: PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO SPAIN

1. SUMMARY AND PROGRAM: PRESIDENT FORD MADE BRIEF, RIGOROUS, SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO MADRID MAY 31-JUNE 1,1975. BETWEEN 11 AM ARRIVAL MAY 31 AND HIS DEPARTURE 0930 JUNE 1, PRESIDENT WAS OFFICIALLY WELCOMED BY GENERAL FRANCO; RECEIVED KEY TO MADRID FROM MAYOR ASSISTED IN COLORFUL CEREMONY BY MUNICIPAL COUNCILORS; WAS ACCLAIMED IN MOTORCADE PROCESSION THROUGH CROWDED DOWNTOWN MADRID; AND ENGAGED IN WIDE-RANGING 25-MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL FRANCO AT PARDO PALACE. PRESIDENT ALSO HOSTED A WORKING LUNCH FOR PRIME MINISTER ARIAS AND KEY CABINET

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MEMBERS FOLLOWED BY PRIVATE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT

AND PRIME MINISTER FOR MORE THAN ONE HOUR.IMMEDIATELY
AFTERWARD, THE PRESIDENT CONFERRED ALONE WITH PRINCE JUAN
CARLOS FOR NEARLY HALF AN HOUR. AFTER SPEAKING BRIEFLY
TO MISSION STAFF AT MONCLOA PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD ATTENDED
STATE DINNER HELD IN THEIR HONOR BY GENERAL AND MRS.FRANCO AT THE
ROYAL PALACE. THE PRESIDENT ATTENDED MASS SUNDAY MORNING AT
A SMALL MADRID CHURCH, FOLLOWED BY FURTHER BRIEF
CONVERSATIONS WITH GENERAL FRANCO, WHO ATTENDED DEPARTURE
AT BARAJAS INT'L AIRPORT. END SUMMARY

2. POPULAR REACTION - PUBLIC RESPONSE TO VISIT WAS
CORDIAL AND UNMARKED BY INCIDENTS IN MADRID (SMALL
STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN ZARAGOZA AND SEVILLE WERE HELD
TO PROTEST). THROGS LINED MOTORCADE ROUTE AND CROWDED
EN MASSE FOR KEY TO CITY PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT PLAZA
DE CIBELES. PRESS COVERAGE WAS EXTENSIVE AND MIXED. IN POLI-
TICAL TERMS,COVERAGE PRECEEDING VISIT TENDED TOARD NEGATIVE,
ALTHOUGH ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY FAVORABLE TO PRESIDENT HIMSELF. TONE
OF COVERAGE SHIFTED DURING AND SUBSEQUENT TO VISIT, HOWEVER,
AND BECAME GENERALLY QUITE FAVORABLE AND POSITIVE IN
PLAYING UP ATMOSPHERE OF WARM COOPERATION STIMULATED BY VISIT.

3. ARRIVAL - ARRIVAL CERMONY AT BARAJAS AIRPORT WAS
ATTENDED BY GENERAL FRANCO AND HIGH GOVT OFFICIALS,
INCLUDING MEMBERS OF CABINET, CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS,
AMERICAN AMBASSADOR AND U.S. EMBASSY PERSONNEL, AND WAS
WITNESSED BY LARGE CONGREGATION OF SPANIARDS AND AMERICANS
ON AIRPORT OBSERVATION RAMP. GENERAL FRANCO READ WELCOMING
STATEMENT, TO WHICH PRESIDENT RESPONDED. DIFFICULTIES WITH
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM OBSCURED REMARKS OF FRANCO, WHO
SPOKE IN FAINT VOICE. IN HIS WELCOMING REMARKS, FRANCO
NOTED THAT BOTH COUNTRIES SHOULD SPARE NO EFFORT TOWARD
FULFILLMENT OF GOALS SUPPORTING FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF
WORLD, THAT PRESIDENT'S VISIT ENABLED HIM TO CONFIRM
AGAIN AFFECTION THAT EVERYTHING IN RELATION TO U.S. INSPIRED
IN SPANISH PEOPLE, AND THAT VISIT WOULD HAVE POSITIVE
RESULTS IN STRENGTHENING EXCELLENT RELATIONS "FORTUNATELY
ALREADY EXISTING BETWEEN SPAIN AND U.S.- PRESIDENT
RESPONDED BY TAKING NOTE THIS VISIT WAS HAPPY OCCASION
IN CONTRAST TO HIS PREVIOUS VISIT AS VICE PRESIDENT AT
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TIME OF MOURNING IN CLOSING DAYS OF 1973, ALLUDING TO
FUNERAL SERVICE FOR ASSASSINATED PRIME MINISTER CARRERO
BLANCO. PRESIDENT STATED HIS CONFIDENCE IN PROVEN ABILITY
OF BOTH NATIONS TO WORK TOGETHER IN PURSUIT OF COMMON
INTERESTS AND IN SPAIN, A NATION WITH FUTURE OF GREAT
PROMISE. REFERRING TO DIGNITY, PRIDE, AND RESILIENCE OF
SPANISH PEOPLE, PRESIDENT NOTED SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO
HISTORY AND CULTURE OF U.S. AND FACT THAT MILLIONS OF

AMERICANS SPEAK SPANISH LANGUAGE. PRESIDENT ENDED REMARKS WITH REFERENCE TO SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO BURDENS OF PROMOTING PROSPERITY AND SECURITY OF ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS AND PROSPECT THAT SPAIN AND U.S. CAN LOOK FORWARD TO FUTURE OF EXPANDING COOPERATION.

4. OFFICIAL CALL - PRESIDENT AND U.S. OFFICIALS ACCOMPANYING HIM TO PARDO SPENT NEARLY HALF AN HOUR IN PRIVATE TOUR D'HORIZON WITH FRANCO ON DEVELOPMENTS IN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY, MEDITERRANEAN AND OTHER REGIONS. TWO LEADERS DISCUSSED IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING U.S./ SPANISH DEFENSE COOPERATION AND BRIEFLY REVIEWED SITUATION IN PORTUGAL, AS MATTER OF CURRENT INTEREST TO BOTH COUNTRIES.

5. WORKING LUNCH - PRESIDENT HOSTED WORKING LUNCH FOR PRIME MINISTER ARIAS IN MONCLOA PALACE, ATTENDED BY SECRETARY OF STATE, AMBASSADOR, AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS, AND KEY MEMBERS OF SPANISH CABINET, HIGH GENERAL STAFF AND FOREIGN MINISTRY. PRESIDENT'S TOAST TOOK NOTE OF OVER QUARTER CENTURY OF CORDIAL AND PRODUCTIVE TIES BETWEEN BOTH NATIONS, CHARACTERIZED BY COMMON EFFORTS TO MEET DANGER OF AGGRESSION AGAINST WESTERN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS AND SUPPORTED BY MUTUAL RESPECT FOR ASPIRATION OF RESPECTIVE PEOPLES TO SECURE BETTER LIFE FOR THEMSELVES. OCCASION OF THEIR MEETING WAS TO REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO BUILD ON THIS COOPERATION IN MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL MANNER. PRESIDENT OBSERVED WORLD HAD CHANGED SINCE FIRST U.S.- SPANISH AGREEMENT SIGNED IN 1953, BUT THAT NEED FOR STRONG DEFENSES HAD NOT LESSENED AND THAT PRESENT AND FUTURE CALLED FOR NO LESS AN EFFORT. PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED SPAIN WAS IMPORTANT PART OF OUR "ATLANTIC CONCEPTION". IN HIS REPLY, PRIME MINISTER ARIAS TOOK NOTE OF INTENSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COOPERATION BY U.S. AND SPAIN OVER PAST 25 YEARS, OBSERVING THAT SPAIN BELIEVED HOUR HAD COME FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HER DIRECT, LOYAL, AND DISINTERESTED COOPERATION IN SPECIFIC AND PRACTICAL TERMS BY NATIONS THAT FORMED WESTERN WORLD, TO WHICH SPAIN BELONGED. PRESIDENT'S VISIT WAS IN LONG TRADITION OF COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND THAT NOBODY BETTER THAN THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT WAS CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING DEPTH AND IMPORTANCE OF EXISTING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AS WELL AS NEED FOR PRESERVING SUCH UNDERSTANDING FOR FUTURE SAKE OF VALUES THAT BELONG TO COMMON CIVILIZATION, THUS FAR SO SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED.

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6. AFTER LUNCH, PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD MET PRINCE JUAN CARLOS AND PRINCESS SOFIA PRIVATELY IN MONCLOA PALACE. MRS.FORD AND THE PRINCESS WITHDREW FOR A SEPARATE CONVERSATION AND THE PRESIDENT AND PRINCE CONFERRED ALONE FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR.

7. MEETING WITH MISSION PERSONNEL - PRESIDENT MET AMERICAN AND LOCAL MISSION PERSONNEL IN GARDEN OF MONCLOA PALACE IN EARLY EVENING, IN EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS HE ALLUDED TO IMPORTANCE TO U.S. OF CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH SPANISH AND KEY ROLE PLAYED BY EMBASSY IN FURTHERING THIS OBJECTIVE. AFTER REMARKS PRESIDENT INDIVIDUALLY GREETED SOME OF THOSE PRESENT.

8. STATE DINNER WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 140 GUESTS AT MADRID'S
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ROYAL PALACE. GENERAL FRANCO READ DINNER TOAST IN WHICH REFERRED TO A QUARTER CENTURE DURING WHICH SPAIN AND U.S. FOLLOWED LINE OF CONSOLIDATION OF FRIENDSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN SERIES OF COMMON AIMS AND OBJECTIVES. FRANCO ESPECIALLY NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO MADRID CONSTITUTED ONE OF FUNDAMENTAL STOPS IN HIS EUROPEAN VISIT. FRANCO ALSO NOTED THAT IN ERA OF SUBVERSION AND TERRORISM SEEKING TO DESTROY WESTERN WAY OF LIFE, NEED IS MORE THAN EVER FOR COHESION FOR DEFENSE OF VALUES COMMON TO ALL. HE AFFIRMED SPAIN'S READINESS AS FRIEND TO COOPERATE IN RECIPROCITY TO DEFEND THESE VALUES AS WELL AS KEEP PEACE AND JUSTICE AMONG ALL NATIONS. PRESIDENT IN HIS REPLY OBSERVED INCREASING INTERDEPENDENCE, MAKING COOPERATION EVER MORE IMPORTANT. COOPERATION BETWEEN SPANISH AND AMERICAN PEOPLES HAS BEEN DEVELOPING IN WIDE RANGE OF FIELDS, INCLUDING ARTS, AGRICULTURE, SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION AND TO MEET NEEDS OF TOMORROW MUST CONTINUE. PRESIDENT REFERRED TO 1974 JOINT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, NOTING U.S./ SPANISH JOINT ENDEAVORS HAVE STRENGTHENED CAUSE OF PEACE AND THAT OTHER NATIONS OF TRANSATLANTIC COMMUNITY HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THIS COOPERATION.

9. DEPARTURE - FOLLOWING HIS ATTENDANCE AT EARLY MASS AT THE SALESAS REALES CONVENT SUNDAY IN DOWNTOWN MADRID, THE PRESIDENT MET AGAIN AT MONCLOA PALACE WITH GENERAL FRANCO FOR ABOUT 15 MINUTES. FRANCO THEN ACCOMPANIED THE PRESIDENT TO BARAJAS AIRPORT FOR THE 9:20 AM DEPARTURE. PRESIDENT MADE NO DEPARTURE STATEMENT.

10. FRANCO'S CONDITION - 82-YEAR OLD SPANISH CHIEF OF STATE ENDURED GRUELLING EVENTS OF PRESIDENT'S 23-HOUR VISIT REMARKABLY WELL, SHOWING MENTAL ALERTNESS THROUGHOUT, IN SPITE OF HIS FRAIL PHYSICAL CONDITION, HE PARTICIPATED FULLY IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE VISIT.

11. POLITICAL RESULTS - AT A TIME OF INCREASED MEDIA CRITICISM OF SPAIN'S SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WITH U.S. UNDER 1970 AFC, AND ALLEGED IMBALANCE BETWEEN SPAIN'S CONCESSIONS AND ITS BENEFITS, PRESIDENTIAL VISIT SERVED TO WARM LOCAL ATMOSPHERE. IT HELPED ASSUAGE GOS IRRITATION OVER APPARENT REBUFFS BY ITS EUROPEAN NATO NEIGHBORS IN DPC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEETING AND AT SUMMIT. VISIT UNDERLINED VALUE OF U.S./ SPANISH COOPERATION AND WAS STRONGEST POSSIBLE RECOGNITION BY U.S. ALONE OF SPAIN'S IMPORTANCE TO WESTERN DEFENSE.

12. PREDICTABLY. PRESIDENT'S VISIT WAS PROTESTED BY LEADING SOCIALIST, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC, AND COMMUNIST OPPOSITION GROUPS, WHO SAW IT AS FORM OF ENDORSEMENT FOR FRANCO REGIME AT TIME WHEN REGIME IS SUPPOSEDLY LOSING ITS GRIP AND HAS STEPPED UP REPRESSION OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES. VISIT, HOWEVER, CAN BE SEEN AS GESTURE TO THE SPAIN THAT MAY EMERGE IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND RECOGNITION OF U.S. INTERESTS IN SPAIN AFTER FRANCO. INTERESTINGLY, ALTHOUGH U.S. PRESS HAS PLAYED UP PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE MEETING WITH FRANCO, SPANISH PRESS HAS GIVEN PASSING REFERENCE TO IT, WHILE REPORTING U.S. PRESS COMMENTS. STABLER

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